

M&O
Serials
QL 671
.G84

THE

MONTHLY



VOLUME 5

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, SEPTEMBER, 1923

NUMBER 9

SEPTEMBER MEETING: In the June GULL a short article on Bird Banding, by Mr. J. Eugene Law, in charge of organization of this work on the Pacific Coast, on behalf of the U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey, ended with a promise by Mr. Law that at an early meeting of the Association, workable traps would be shown and demonstrated and data presented on methods and results to date.

In view of the interest and importance of this subject, it is desirable that this opportunity should be open to as many as possible and arrangements have therefore been made for Mr. Law to present the matter to the members and friends of both the Cooper Ornithological Club and the Audubon Association at a joint meeting of the two organizations, to be held at eight o'clock on

Thursday Evening, September 27th, at the
Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley.

San Francisco members should take Key Route Ferry at 7:00 p. m.; Berkeley train at the mole, transferring at Alcatraz Avenue to connecting Car L. Alight at Bowditch Street and follow the street into University grounds. The museum is the second building to the right at the first turn, and is entered by door on the north side, reached by a path around the east side of the building. East Bay members may reach the same point by the College Avenue line No. 6. Visitors will be welcome, as usual.

Those who are members of both organizations will receive no further notice of this meeting from the Cooper Club.

* * *

Mr. Law has devoted much time and energy to the development of this work on our Coast and his efforts merit the recognition and support of all who appreciate the importance of increasing our knowledge of our feathered friends. It is the earnest hope of the directors of both organizations, that every member will make an effort to be present on this occasion.

The systematic banding of birds, under a comprehensive programme will contribute enormously to our knowledge of migration habits and of many other features of the conduct and life histories of birds.

* * *

SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIP will be taken on Sunday, September 16th, to Baumberg Station, a short distance below Mt. Eden, on the shore of San Francisco Bay, for the purpose of observing waders and shore birds. The particular attraction here lies in the fact that avocets and stilts are found in this locality at this time.

Take Southern Pacific Ferry leaving San Francisco at 8:20 a. m. East Bay members may take the train at First Street and Broadway, Oakland, at 9:00 a. m. Fare, 78 cents each way from San Francisco or 60 cents from Oakland. Return train leaves Baumberg at 4:33 p. m., reaching San Francisco at 5:50 p. m. Bring lunch and canteen.

THE GULL

The club house at Baumberg may be reached by automobile via the highway from San Lorenzo to Mt. Eden and Alvarado, turning off toward the bay about three-quarters of a mile below Mt. Eden four corners. Or, otherwise, from car line at Haywards, via the road to Mt. Eden and thence as above.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE AUGUST MEETING: The seventy-ninth regular meeting of the Association was held on August 9th, in the Assembly Hall of the San Francisco Public Library, with President Kibbe in the chair; Mrs. Carl R. Smith, Secretary; twelve members and a guest present.

The programme was the annual exchange of vacation experiences, and the time was agreeably spent in this fashion. The Secretary read an entertaining letter from Dr. E. Goodman, in which he set forth the reactions of a lotanist who for the first time had participated in trips devoted to bird observations, and contrasted the study of rapidly moving creatures with that of stationary flowers and trees. Mr. Carl R. Smith spoke at some length of his observations during his annual outing, and has kindly summarized them for THE GULL in an account of

TWO WEEKS IN THE NORTHERN SIERRA

It is customary for the family to spend fifty weeks of each year in planning and making ready for a camping trip and this year formed no exception. The day finally came, each necessary article was stowed in its allotted space and we turned eastward on July 21st. The first bird of interest was a short-eared owl near Sacramento, the only one I have seen outside of Humboldt County, where they are quite plentiful. Leaving Sacramento for Nevada City, we crossed the watershed of the American river and climbed rapidly until the road topped the divide between the Bear and Yuba rivers. Then we turned nearly north, following the backbone just below the crest, where one can trace the great fault line that extends from Mt. Lassen southwardly into Tuolumne County. East of this fault line, not only the streams but the ledges as well, have been barren of gold.

Traversing the territory drained by the three forks of the Yuba river and its lesser tributaries, you come into a country of delicately colored streams, as the Yubas flow over a formation which gives their waters a coloration of light emerald green, making this, to my mind, the most beautiful watershed of California. The first night we camped on Oregon creek, where it joins the Middle Yuba and the two following nights on Fiddle creek of the North Yuba system. This we called "Paradise" on account of the beautiful growths of Indian rhubarb, ferns, and leopard lilies, which for miles are completely arched over with alders, willows, Douglas fir, dogwood, yellow pine, black and scrub oaks.

The following day we went through the historic towns of Downieville and Sierra City and as we passed the Sierra Buttes we turned to our left and commenced the climb to Gold Lake, crossing the divide between the Yuba and Feather rivers at about 7,000 feet. The watershed curiously divides on large mountain meadows, which, at the time of our visit, were carpeted with a great variety of beautiful flowers. At Gold Lake we tarried for two days and watched the slender-billed nuthatches which inhabit this locality in numbers, and also the white-headed woodpecker, and on July 25th, we found a white-crowned sparrow's nest with two eggs.

On July 26th, we dropped down from Gold Lake into a country of large, open mountain meadows, with western bluebirds, mourning doves, black phoebs, meadowlarks, lark sparrows, and what a country this must be to the geologists! Looking back thousands of years, I seemed to see a great lake, draining to the north. The Sierra rose and tipped it, but what became of the western rim of this ancient lake? Then, at a later time, the cross-range of Shasta, Lassen and Cinder Cone pushed up scattering lava over the whole

THE GULL

country, forcing the cutting of new rivers which we know as the Feathers. At Lake Almanor, which is about twelve miles long and five wide, we spent three lovely, warm days and three cold nights with lots of mosquitoes.

Lake Almanor is an artificial body of water formed by a dam across the narrows of what were extensive meadows, drained by the North Fork of the Feather river. It is fed by small streams and many large springs, some in the vicinity where we camped being gushers and extremely cold. The Geological Survey map shows this meadow as swampy and old-timers say that it was a lake and largely overgrown with tules, fed by countless large springs and used as a nesting-place by many water birds in early days, although I find but few records from this vicinity. Eared grebes were there in numbers; the black terns were plentiful on the eastern side, and Farallon cormorants of all sizes were very numerous. Great blue herons, little brown cranes, spotted sandpipers and bald eagles were there, and a pair of ospreys, nesting. The numbers of kingfishers surpassed anything I have ever seen, even on the south fork of the Eel river. White-headed woodpeckers, ashy-throated flycatchers, Cassin finches, pine siskins, fox sparrows, western tanagers, slender-billed nuthatches were there, together with the only red-breasted nuthatch seen on the trip. There were mountain chickadees, hermit thrushes, robins and Sierra creepers, one of which was so individualistic that he reversed his usual form and came foraging *down* the trees.

At the northeastern end of the lake, the pair of ospreys above noted had their nest in the top of a dead tree, which was broken off about thirty feet above the water. The nest has probably been in use for several years, as it is some four or five feet in diameter and three feet high. It is safe from man unless he should kill the parent birds for the tree is without bark or limbs and is practically impossible to climb. When I observed the old birds feeding their young, I believed they could nest here unmolested for years, that is, as long as the old tree could stand the elements. We camped about a mile from the nest and it was their custom to fish in the cove in the early morning. Their screaming told us that it was about six o'clock.

On the third morning of our stay, the osprey's screams were so shrill and so prolonged that my attention was called to the oft-described and pictured scene of the bald eagle robbing the osprey. When first sighted, the osprey was about fifteen feet above the surface of the lake, with the eagle swooping down under him. This position was maintained while the osprey rose, until the birds were approximately 150 feet above the lake, and then the strategy of securing the other fellow's trout for breakfast became clear to me. The eagle now shifted to a position *above* the osprey and swooped with talons extended, but did not strike. His mad rush was checked and he fairly enveloped the osprey with his wings. The osprey's screams rose to a higher pitch. He turned and twisted, dropped like a bolt, but could not evade his tormenter. When he descended the eagle worked under him and when he rose, the eagle was over him. So intense was the struggle that I fairly held my breath. Finally, they maneuvered to a goodly height and this time the eagle struck with a force that sent the osprey reeling, and the fish toward the water. Here the eagle showed what wing power could accomplish, as, with a few swift strokes, he captured the falling fish fully twenty feet above the water and alighted on the dead branch of a fir, directly over my head. In alighting, he held the fish, which was from eight to nine inches long, in one talon, and made an easy landing on the other foot, then leisurely devoured his booty, dropping the bones to the ground. The meal finished, he preened his feathers and winged his way in the direction of Mt. Lassen.

This is a porcupine country and we had one in camp nearly every night. A red fox, chickarees and golden-mantled squirrels and a single gray squirrel were encountered in the 800-mile trip. Both mule and timber deer were plentiful but I was not familiar with those known locally by these names, both sorts seeming different from the deer met further south in the Sierra

Bear tracks were seen only twenty six miles west of Chester, on Mill creek. We found no signs of mountain lions on the whole trip. A little visitor in the shape of a civet cat, or ring-tailed cat, called on us one night and partook of the following repast: one large lamb chop, one slice of ham, one pint of stew that belonged to our dog, and about one-quarter pound of grease, giving evidence how nicely it could clean out a frying-pan. The cat was not seen, but it left plenty of tracks for identification. Ground squirrels were also found in the higher altitudes and tracks of the flying squirrel, an animal of which I could not catch sight, despite diligent searching.

CARL R. SMITH.



AUGUST FIELD TRIP was taken on Sunday, the 12th, to Point Bonita and Rodeo Lagoon. The tramping contingent took the 8:15 ferry from San Francisco, followed on the 9:15 by those who preferred to ride to the destination. The walkers followed the shore road through Fort Baker, and with short cuts to Battery Spencer and thence to the saddle at the summit. From this point the trail was followed, overlooking the Golden Gate, around to Fort Barry and down the gulch to the beach separating the lagoon from the ocean. The day was fine for walking, but the fog swept in with grim determination, cheating us of our gorgeous view. Now and again it would lift for a brief interval, but all the horns were going at full tilt during the entire trip. After lunch on the beach, we proceeded to the lighthouse and enjoyed the somewhat restricted outlook until nearly six o'clock. The feature of the bird list was furnished by two wandering tattlers at the Point.

Members in attendance were: Misses Baily and Olive Burroughs; Mesdames Kelly, Kibbe, Mexia, Northway, Parry and Thomas; Messrs. Kibbe, Rapp, Thomas and Ananda Jacobs. As guests, we had the pleasure of entertaining Miss Naomi Beers, of Hilo, Miss Bastian, Mrs. Funero, of Pittsburg, Mrs. Trigo, from Illinois, Messrs. I. M. Parry and Vinton Smith. Twelve members and six guests.

The bird list was goodly, although we missed some friends that we had hoped to see. Western, California and Heermann gulls; terns, Brandt cormorants, brown pelicans, godwits, wandering tattlers, curlews and turnstones; sharp-shinned, red-tailed and sparrow hawks; kingfisher, flicker, white-throated swift and Allen hummer; California jay, crow, red-winged blackbird, meadowlark and Brewer blackbird; linnets, willow and green-backed goldfinches and pine siskin; Nuttall, lark and song sparrows, California towhee and western tanager; cliff and rough-winged swallows, bush and wren-tits, Vigors wren and western gnatcatcher. Thirty-seven species.

A. S. KIBBE.

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

FOR THE STUDY AND THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

President.....	A. S. Kibbe.....	1534 Grove St., Berkeley
Recording Secretary.....	Mrs. Carl R. Smith.....	63 42d Ave., San Francisco
Corresponding Secretary.....	C. B. Lastreto.....	260 California St., San Francisco
Treasurer.....	C. R. Thomas.....	1605 Rose St., Berkeley

Meets second Thursday of each month, at 8:00 p.m., in Assembly Hall of San Francisco
Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets.

Address Bulletin correspondence to President.

Subscription to Bulletin alone, 35c per year.

Single copies 5c